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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 000703

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/BCLTV, P  
PACOM FOR FPA HUSO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2015

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [TH](#) [POL](#) [MIL](#)

SUBJECT: THAILAND SUPPORTS TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U.S.  
MILITARY ASSETS FROM TSUNAMI AFFECTED REGION

REF: A. SECSTATE 15234 NOTAL

[B](#). BANGKOK 508

[C](#). BANGKOK 524

[D](#). BANGKOK 525

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce. Reason 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#). (C) Reftel A requests Post query the RTG for its views of the planned withdrawal of U.S. military assets from the tsunami affected region. Utapao naval air base, which is

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located in Thailand, serves as the regional hub for Combined Support Force 536 (CSF 536). Nodes from that hub, known as Combined Support Groups, in Sri Lanka, Southern Thailand, and Indonesia have coordinated relief from Utapao and U.S. Naval ships. Reftel B outlined the Country Team's concurrence with the drawdown of Combined Support Group Thailand (CSG-THAI) which took place on January 22.

[2](#). (C) On January 15, Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz explained to the Defense Minister that CSF 536 would draw down once relief efforts could be handed over fully to civilian agencies, NGOs and International Organizations (reftel D). From January 17-19, PACOM Commander ADM Fargo briefed the proposed timetable for withdrawal of forces from Utapao to the Thai Defense Minister, Supreme Commander, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister (reftel C and septels). All concurred with the timetable. ADM Fargo explained to PM Thaksin Shinawatra that relief units could all be redeployed from Utapao by the end of February or early March. Thaksin approved of the plan and said that if the US needed to maintain its deployment of relief-related forces at Utapao a short while past its anticipated redeployment from Indonesia it would be "no problem." We have emphasized to our Thai interlocutors that, although CSG-THAI's mission has been accomplished, a number of U.S. military relief operations remain underway or are planned. These tasks are being undertaken under the supervision of JUSMAGTHAI and the Embassy with the full support of PACOM. They include forensic work underway by teams from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Civil Affairs projects, engineering assessments and upgrades and improvements at Utapao. The Thai Government is aware of these and has expressed appreciation.

[3](#). (C) Post is in regular contact with representatives of third-country militaries embedded in the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT) based at CSF-536 HQ at Utapao. Those officers have been regularly briefed on redeployment and transition plans and have not indicated any objections to us.

[4](#). (C) Post has conducted a comprehensive media campaign to highlight work being done in Thailand and being conducted from Utapao to assist Indonesia and Sri Lanka. A few fringe newspapers have claimed that our work at Utapao and in Aceh is designed to create a permanent base presence in the region but the vast majority of Thai media support U.S. relief efforts. We will continue to monitor media developments but do not anticipate any adverse reaction to a planned withdrawal from Utapao as outlined in reftel A.

BOYCE